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ABSTRACT

Illinois' state-funded preschool program, the Illinois Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure, is serving almost 29,000 children in the 1989-90 period on an allocation of 48 million dollars, which was distributed to 184 projects in 353 school districts. The preschool projects serve children of 3-5 years, who are taught 10-15 hours a week by teachers with early childhood or day care supervisor certificates. This report discusses preschool expansion, access to services, program effectiveness, and issues for further study and action. Section I, on preschool expansion, reports growth of funds and services, estimated numbers of children who need these services, expansion that would meet the estimated need, and the use of preschool funds by individual projects. Section II, which studies access to services, describes children of working parents, differences in urban and rural access to services, and the problem of access to services for children in Chicago. Section III, on program effectiveness, explores aspects of effective preschools, effects of the Children at Risk Program, and long-term evidence of effectiveness. Section IV takes up the issues of screening systems, integration of children with disabilities, and increased collaboration among early childhood programs. Appendices provide related legislation, project-by-project comparisons, and data on variations in projects' use of preschool funds. (RH)

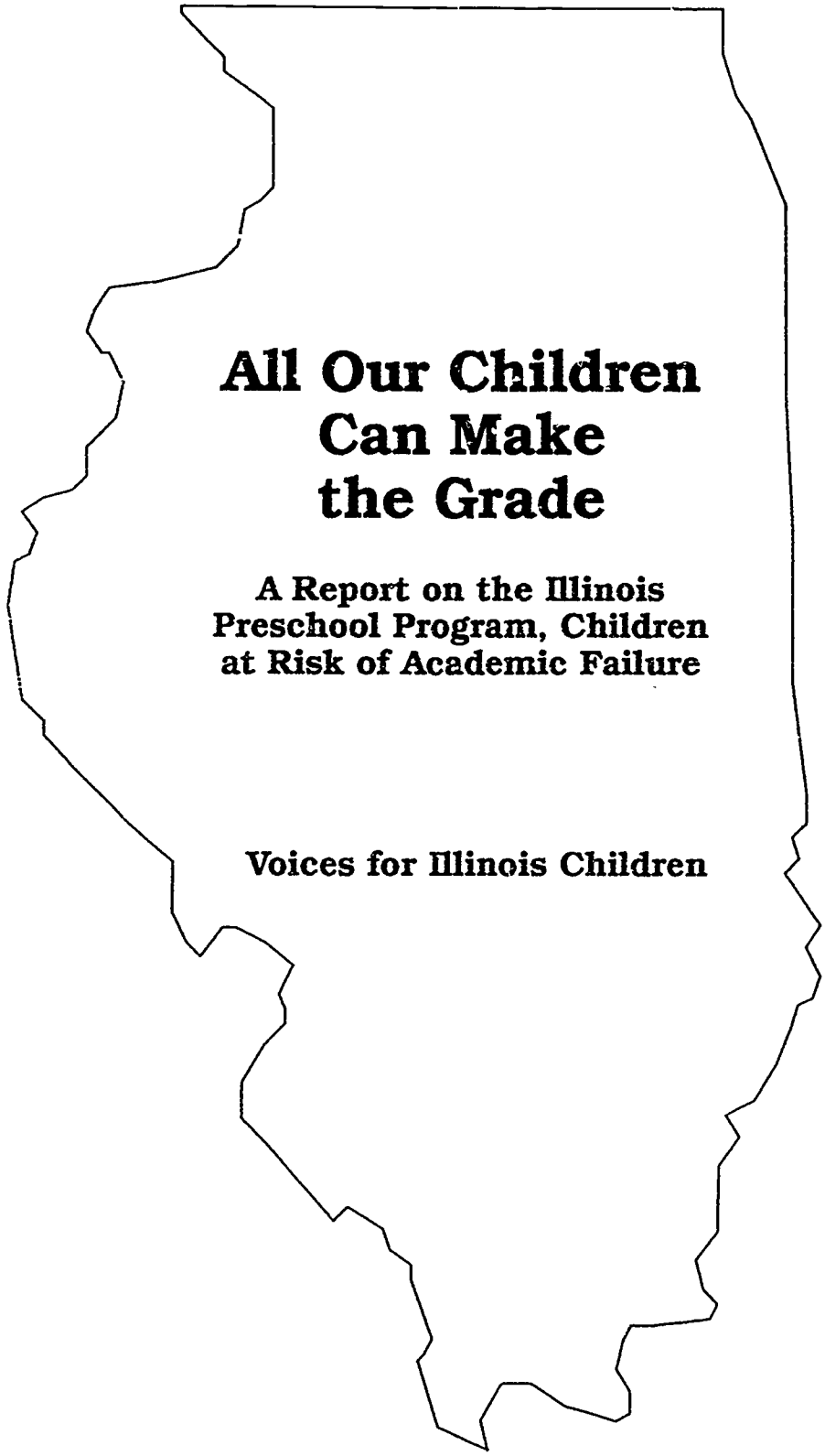
All Our Children Can Make the Grade

A Report on the Illinois Preschool Program, Children at Risk of Academic Failure

Every man at three years old
is half his height.

Leonardo da Vinci

Photography by Jean Clough.



All Our Children Can Make the Grade

A Report on the Illinois Preschool Program, Children at Risk of Academic Failure

Voices for Illinois Children

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Dear Reader:

We are all aware of the number of children in Illinois who either do not graduate from high school, or graduate with insufficient skills to compete in an increasingly competitive job market.

One proven remedy for school failure is providing preschool for three- to five-year-old children. There they have an opportunity to get an early start, and learn while playing in a safe, nurturing environment.

Illinois has funded such a program, the Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure, since 1985. It now serves almost 19,000 children.

We commend the state on the rapid expansion of this initiative. But the expansion should continue until all eligible children are enrolled in this or similar preschool programs.

Attending preschool, however, does not guarantee a head start. Poorly run preschools can set children back. This report documents the progress the Illinois program has made, and recommends changes that would make it more effective.

Children at Risk preschool should be more accessible to children with working parents, children in rural areas, and children in urban districts where there is no room in local schools for preschool classrooms. It should better serve the needs of language minority children and children with disabilities. In Chicago, the administration of the preschool program should begin to allow the local creativity encouraged by the Chicago School Reform legislation.

Parental involvement is a key to preschool's success. The state should pay more attention to local school districts' records on encouraging that involvement. The wide gap in resources, pay, and staffing among preschool and day care programs should be eliminated. Finally, the Illinois State Board of Education, the administering agency, should establish effective monitoring and evaluation procedures, so that we can discover where the program is successful, and where it is not.

We welcome your comments and your involvement in the task of making the early years a time of promise for all our children.

Richard Mandel
Chair of the Board of Directors

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Executive Summary

The Problem

School dropout rates have been rising throughout the state, and in Chicago, up to 45 percent of entering high school freshmen will drop out before graduation.[1] The current estimate that two million adults in this state are functionally illiterate,[2] and the high cost that Illinois pays for the underemployed and the unemployed indicate that the educational crisis is also an economic crisis. The rapid disappearance of less-skilled positions from the job market magnifies the impact of an inadequately prepared work force.

The process that leads to school failure does not begin in high school; it begins in children's earliest years. The period from ages three to five is a critical time for children to gain key learning skills -- skills that will allow them to understand and integrate information that is given to them -- and the self-confidence to believe in their own abilities and try new learning experiences.

Ideally, parents would have the time, knowledge, and resources to help their children develop these capacities. In practice, many parents do not, and many young children enter school unprepared to learn. These children's early frustrations with academic material can lead their teachers and fellow students to identify them as "slow learners" and the like. Those labels reduce already low levels of self-esteem, and further impede their progress. At each academic level the sense of failure becomes more deeply entrenched, and the process becomes more difficult to reverse. For many, dropping out will seem the only choice.

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[1]The Illinois State Board of Education reports an FY89 annual high school dropout rate of 6.54. During the previous six years the rate rose steadily, from 4.7 in FY83 to 4.9 in FY84, 5.1 in FY85, 5.4 in FY86, 5.6 in FY87, and 6.3 in FY88. The overall four-year average dropout rate for the state is not officially calculated, but rough estimates put it at between 25 and 40 percent of entering freshman.

[2]Literacy Grants, Fiscal Year 1990, Secretary of State's Literacy Office, Springfield, 1989.

A Solution

A growing national consensus points to developmentally appropriate preschool as the best way to help children between the ages of three and five prepare for school. Preschool can provide the early concrete experiences that will develop young children's ability to understand and integrate information, and spark their desire to learn. Model preschool programs have demonstrated long-term effects that include better early adult employment records and lower arrest, welfare, and teenage pregnancy rates.[3]

In developmentally appropriate preschool, knowledgeable, caring adults develop children's abilities to make plans, carry those plans out, and to be creative in working together, working independently, and solving problems -- all in the context of play. It takes place in an environment that instills security, invites exploration, and makes available a wide variety of materials. It also provides a number of opportunities for family involvement, in the home, at the preschool site, and in the planning and decision-making processes.

The primary goal of such preschool is the development of children's physical, cognitive and emotional skills. It differs from traditional perceptions of day care in that ideally it is driven by children's developmental needs, rather than by parents' need to provide responsible care for their children in the parents' absence. Some day care centers also provide developmentally appropriate preschool services; others do not. The same might be said of preschool programs themselves.

Illinois' State-Funded Preschool Program

The Illinois Prekindergarten Program for Children at Risk of Academic Failure is Illinois' state-funded preschool program. Created by the state legislature in 1985, it is the fastest-growing preschool program in Illinois. Funded at $12 million to serve 7,000 children in its first full year, the program has grown to serve almost 19,000 children in 1989-90, on an allocation of $48 million. The funding request for 1990-91 will be $79 million, intended to serve 26,000 children. Another 22,000 Illinois preschoolers are served by the federally funded Head Start Program. This total of 41,000 children currently enrolled in publicly funded preschool programs represents only 37 percent of the 112,000 children estimated by the state to need these services.[4]

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[3]The studies that describe these results are discussed in the sub-section, Preschool's Effects on Children.

[4]When the Illinois State Board of Education's estimate, made in 1984, is recalculated using current demographic data, it yields a total of 127,000 eligible children. See the sub-section, Estimated Numbers of Children Who Need These Services.

Administered by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) through grants to local school districts, the Children at Risk preschool program serves children "who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined as a result of screening procedures to be at risk of academic failure."[5]

Recommendations

Effective preschool education is the best and least expensive way to improve children's chances of success in school and in later life. Illinois' Children at Risk preschool program is a major state initiative to provide preschool for eligible children. We applaud its rapid expansion. Our analysis of this program, however, shows that the program's effectiveness would be greatly increased if the state adopted the following recommendations:

- *All* young children who are at risk of educational failure should have the opportunity to enroll in preschool programs. The state-funded Children at Risk program must, along with Head Start, expand to meet the need. The proposed expansion to $79 million for FY91 should be approved. Program expansion must be tied to program effectiveness, and to equal access for all of the children who need these services.

- The Children at Risk program should adopt the federally funded Head Start program's practice of setting performance standards for the provision of health and nutritional services.

- The majority of parents work, but almost all Children at Risk preschool sessions last no more than three hours a day. The local school districts that administer these projects should provide for working parents by a combination of means: full-day programs; providing preschool services in day-care centers; and encouraging local preschool projects to cooperate with nearby day-care centers. School districts must minimize the number of times children are shuffled between different caretakers in the course of a day.

- In many urban areas, school buildings are overcrowded and cannot accommodate preschool classes. This problem is particularly acute in Hispanic and African-American areas of Chicago, where thousands of eligible children go unserved. Urban projects must step up their efforts to subcontract educational programs within those communities to qualified not-for-profit organizations, provide services in day care centers, and expand home-based services. As a first step, the Chicago Board of Education should subcontract 20 percent of its Children at Risk funds to qualified not-for-profit organizations.

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[5]For the full text of that legislation, see Appendix A.

- The Chicago Board of Education, in keeping with the spirit of the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, should encourage local school councils in elementary schools to develop preschool programs that reflect the particular needs and resources of their communities.

- In rural areas, many children who need preschool live too far away from central preschool sites. Many rural school districts lack the funds to hire qualified personnel, the experience to write proposals, and the concentration of students that would win state preschool funds. Home-based options, where preschool teachers instruct children and their parents in the home, must be expanded in rural areas, and training and incentives must be provided to build effective rural preschool programs.

- Fifteen percent of the children in the Children at Risk program have a primary language other than English. For the majority of these children, that primary language is Spanish. But there is a serious shortage of certified bilingual preschool teachers throughout the state. The State Board of Education should devise strategies to assist school districts in the recruitment and training of bilingual staff.

- Parent involvement is crucial to the success of preschool projects. In the best of worlds the family enriches the child's preschool experience, and involvement in the preschool gives parents the tools to enrich their children's experience at home. The reality of parent involvement, however, varies widely, ranging from substantial to minimal. ISBE should establish guidelines that describe the range of practices that constitute effective parent involvement, and monitor that involvement more closely.

- Children at Risk, Head Start, and the Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) day care programs are the largest providers of services to preschool-aged children in Illinois. Among these providers, wide disparities in program quality and staff salaries currently exist. In 1990 these programs need to begin a formal, active collaboration -- on both the statewide and community levels -- to forge cooperation and collective standards for program quality, personnel, and salary levels.

- The State Board of Education's system for monitoring preschool projects lacks the detail and precision necessary for accurate assessment of projects and timely improvement of their services. ISBE should replace the current project monitoring system with one that provides more reliable information.

- ISBE currently has no school year average daily attendance figure for each of its preschool projects. This means that a critical aspect of monitoring is missing. It also means that there is no reliable figure for the average cost per child. The State Board should immediately request the information needed to calculate average daily attendance, and use that figure in the monitoring and contract renewal process.

- In evaluating its preschool projects' long-term effects on children, ISBE relies solely on general teacher assessments, rather than using any type of detailed observation and standard measure that can be used to compare projects. No control or comparison groups have been established to determine project effectiveness. The state simply does not have enough information to tell whether or not its preschool projects are having the desired impact. The State Board of Education should replace its current ambiguous program review form with one that is more specific and interpretable. The State Board should also establish a rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of its preschool projects.

In two additional areas, ISBE, its projects, and the surrounding early childhood community need to conduct further study and action:

- In the screening systems that determine a child's eligibility for the project, procedures, testing instruments, and entry criteria vary widely from project to project. These processes should be examined carefully, and system-wide standards should be set for screening and eligibility.

- Unlike Head Start, which requires that 10 percent of its program openings be filled by children who have disabilities, the Children at Risk program has not addressed the issue of integrating children with disabilities into its regular sites. The State Board of Education should take immediate action to require preschool projects to find and admit eligible children who also have disabilities.

Illinois has made rapid strides in providing preschool education for young children who are at risk of starting school unprepared. But the state's responsibility extends beyond the expansion of this program. Problems exist within the program that constitute serious obstacles to fair and equal access, and program effectiveness and accountability. A much more aggressive stance is needed on the part of the state legislature and the Illinois State Board of Education, the administering agency, to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

The state must develop a program monitoring and evaluation system that permits a reliable assessment of program effectiveness, and then encourages improvements in weaker projects. It is not sufficient that the state preschool program is a good idea, and that children seem to benefit from its services. At these levels of funding, and with the educational and life chances of thousands of children at stake, the Children at Risk program has to prove that it is the most effective program it can be.

Introduction

- The Problem
- Preschool's Effects on Children
- The Children at Risk Program

Introduction

The Problem

As any parent knows, young children are quite capable of memorizing words and numbers and parroting them back. However, their worlds are still very small, and their perspectives are limited. Unless new information they encounter is vividly connected with what they can already see, hear, feel, and do, it is not likely to be understood, nor is it likely to catch their curiosity or help them understand the world around them.

For example, a detailed explanation of the concepts of mass, weight, and displacement will do very little to bring four year olds closer to grasping them, but with a little sand and water play, the ideas will make more sense. Young children can see what happens to the level of water when they remove one cupful, see how much sand it takes to fill the same cup, feel the difference in the weight of both commodities, and feel the differences in their consistency. If they are encouraged to explore, question, and speculate, the learning process continues, and the children have never stopped doing what comes most naturally to them at this age: playing.

If the adults in their lives lack the time, resources, or knowledge to help children through this developmental stage, chances are they will stay at this stage. They will enter school, sit at their desks, and try to grasp facts and figures and fill out their ditto sheets correctly. Without solid experience in understanding and integrating information they will fail to hold onto it, and some will eventually stop trying.

Dropout statistics show that the school failure process is well underway in early grades. A recent study by the Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance compared the reading and math scores of children who eventually dropped out with those of children who went on to graduate. The study showed the group of students who eventually dropped out were learning significantly less as early as first grade, with differences increasing each year.[6] By first grade, some children have been set on the road to failure.

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[6]G. Alfred Hess Jr., Arthur Lyons, Lou Corsino, and Emily Wells, *Against the Odds: The Early Identification of Dropouts*, Chicago Panel on Public School Policy and Finance, Chicago, 1989.

Attempts to help children catch up with their peers become less effective at each grade level. As the gap between the curriculum and their understanding of it grows larger, their level of frustration rises, and the labeling process convinces them that they really are "failures." The State Board estimates that 112,000 three to five year olds in Illinois live in circumstances which might deprive them of the early learning skills that they would need to avoid that fate.

Preschool's Effects on Children

An effective preschool experience is increasingly seen as the best way to help children between the ages of three and five prepare for school. Preschool can give these children the early concrete experiences that will develop their ability to understand and integrate information, and spark their desire to learn. In its 1987 statement on educational needs in the United States, the Committee for Economic Development placed preschool for disadvantaged three and four year olds high on its list of priorities, and recommended "that the nation continue to expand these programs until every eligible child has the opportunity to be enrolled."[7]

The federally funded Head Start preschool program was established in 1965 to provide preschool to children who live in poverty. It currently serves 22,500 children in Illinois. Although the two programs differ somewhat in structure,[8] Head Start and the Illinois Children at Risk program offer essentially the same type of preschool education. Early childhood concepts propounded by both programs include those developed by the Perry Preschool Project in the mid-1960s. Head Start, unlike the Children at Risk program, also sets detailed performance standards for the provision of health, mental health, nutrition, and social services.

The Perry Project has provided the most widely accepted long-term evidence of effective preschool's benefits, and the most eloquent argument for its value in children's lives. In the early 1960s, 123 African-American children from a single school district in Ypsilanti, Michigan were selected into a long-term study that is still in progress. The children were divided at random into two groups. Half of the children received two and a half hours of center-based preschool each day, plus home visits lasting an hour and a half each week. Children in a control group received no services.

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[7]*Children in Need, Investment Strategies for the Educationally Disadvantaged*, a statement by the Research and Policy Committee of the Committee for Economic Development, New York, NY, 1987.

[8]Head Start has an income eligibility criterion, whereas the Children at Risk Program uses economic, cultural, language, and family factors to determine eligibility as well as children's scores on a variety of early childhood tests.

The project used what is now known as the High/Scope Curriculum. High/Scope follows the premise that children learn by doing -- by planning their activities, carrying them out, and reviewing what they have done. The curriculum is based on the work of Swiss child psychologist Jean Piaget. It stresses language development, and uses concrete objects and experiences to lay the groundwork for children's ability to grasp concepts.[9]

The Perry program children and control group children have been compared on a number of characteristics from the time they entered the program. Although the scholastic gains made by program children in the first two years of elementary school had faded by third grade, the long-term results were spectacular. Eighteen percent more program children finished high school, and 17 percent more had enrolled in college or job training programs by age 19.[10]

Effects on other aspects of their lives were equally dramatic. Compared to control group children at age 19, 18 percent more of the preschool group held jobs, 20 percent more were supported by their own or their spouses' employment, and 16 percent more reported that they were satisfied with their work. Twenty percent fewer program participants had been arrested, and 14 percent fewer received public assistance. The percentage of program participants that gave birth in their teens was half that of the control group participants.

The federal Head Start program has also been the subject of a number of studies during its 24 years in existence. In the mid-1980s, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services commissioned an analysis and synthesis of all existing Head Start research. Like the findings from the Perry Project, the resulting report showed immediate gains in program children's IQs, school readiness, and achievement test scores (compared to those of control group children). Although the Head Start synthesis did not present the types of long term data collected in the Perry Project, it did report that a few of its component studies had shown Head Start children less likely to be retained in grade or placed in special education classes.[11]

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[9]For more information about the elements of effective preschool, see Section III of this Report. For a detailed description of the High/Scope Curriculum, see Mary Hohmann, Bernard Banet, and David P. Weikart, *Young Children in Action*, High/Scope Press, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1979.

[10]John R. Berrueta-Clement, Lawrence J. Schweinhart, W. Steven Barnett, Ann S. Epstein, and David P. Weikart, *Changed Lives: The Effects of the Perry Preschool Program on Youths Through Age 19*, High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, Ypsilanti, Michigan, 1984.

[11]Ruth Hubbell McKey, Larry Condelli, Harriet Ganson, Barbara J. Barrett, Catherine McConkey, and Margaret C. Plantz, *The Impact of Head Start on Children, Families and Communities*, CSR, Incorporated, Washington, DC, 1985.

The Perry Preschool results are particularly dramatic, showing that a well designed preschool that also reaches out to parents can significantly boost the life chances of disadvantaged children.

On the other side of this opportunity, however, are the harmful effects of an inadequate preschool. At the worst, such a program could diminish a child's self-confidence, weaken the authority and involvement of the child's parents, and place the child in an environment that does not nourish. The characteristics of a good preschool are discussed in the sub-section, Elements of Effective Preschool.

The Children at Risk Program

The Illinois state-funded preschool program is a relative newcomer. Created by the state legislature in 1985, it is currently in its fourth full program year. In fiscal year 1990 the program will serve an estimated 18,850 children at a total cost of $47.8 million. The legislation that created the program, an amendment to the Illinois School Code, sets out a few program requirements.

Program funds are administered by the State Board of Education, which awards grants to local school districts to run preschool projects. The preschool projects are for children ages three to five, and are to be taught by teachers holding early childhood certificates or day care supervisor certificates.

The legislation permits school districts to subcontract their preschool programs, including educational programs, to private schools or not-for-profit organizations. While the State Board recommends well accepted guidelines for organizing and running preschool projects, the individual school districts which administer the projects set the rules for them, including the curriculum.

Costs, practices, and levels of service vary from project to project. Most projects are operated by individual school districts, but some districts have formed joint projects. The program currently funds 184 projects, serving 353 school districts. Appendix B lists the size of the program grant to each project in FY88 and FY89, and the recommended program capacity.

Children between the ages of three and five are chosen for the program in screening sessions. These sessions are conducted by preschool projects, sometimes in cooperation with their local special education districts. Each district may choose its own criteria for what constitutes being at risk of educational failure. Once children are enrolled, the amount of time they spend in preschool classrooms is also determined by the individual districts. Most spend between 10 and 15 hours each week.

Districts are required by law to include a parent education component in their preschool projects, and are encouraged by ISBE to have staff visit parents in their homes, and to provide opportunities for parents to volunteer in class and on field trips, and to participate in parent meetings and classes. Individual districts decide which parent activities they will provide; their frequency and intensity; and the steps they will take to make these activities accessible to parents who work, and parents who have to take care of other children.

Section I: Preschool Expansion

- Growth of Funds and Services
- Estimated Numbers of Children Who Would Need These Services
- Expansion That Would Fill the Estimated Need
- The Use of Preschool Funds

Section I: Preschool Expansion

The state estimates that 112,000 three-to-five-year-old children in Illinois are eligible for state-funded preschool.[12] Approximately 18,850 will be served in the state-funded program this year, and an additional 22,000 will receive Head Start preschool services. That leaves more than 70,000 children -- 60 percent of the estimated need -- unserved. For these children, all of the efforts and advances that have been made in early childhood education will count for nothing.

The past two allocations for the preschool program represented substantial increases over the previous years' funding, but they were not matched by commensurate increases in the number of children served. In FY89, funding rose by 88 percent and children served rose by 59 percent. A 100-percent increase in allocation this year is expected to yield a 69-percent increase in the number of children served. The 65-percent increase requested for next year is intended to accommodate 37 percent more children than this year's program expects to serve. These discrepancies require explanation.

Program expansion raises a number of questions: How far has the program been expanded in its three years of existence, and how large is the proposed expansion? How many children need preschool, and what program growth would be necessary to serve them? How are preschool funds being spent?

Growth of Funds and Services

Table 1 (Page 14), which describes the budget history of Illinois' Children at Risk funds and services, illustrates two trends: (1) that Illinois is committed to preschool and is willing to back that commitment financially; and (2) that preschool is getting more expensive.

Appropriations have taken a steep rise in each of the past two fiscal years: up 88 percent from $12.7 million in FY88 to $23.9 million in FY89; then doubling to reach their present level of $47.8 million. The $78.9 million appropriation proposed for next year represents a 65-percent increase. By FY93, the State Board is expected to ask for $117.6 million for this program, an increase of 49 percent over two years.

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[12]That number was calculated by the Illinois State Board of Education. For a more complete discussion of the formula and the estimated need, see the sub-section, Estimated Numbers of Children Who Need These Services.

Table 1: Illinois State-Funded Preschool
State Costs and Numbers of Children Served, FY87 through FY91[13]

	FY87	FY88	FY89*	FY90*	FY91**
Appropriations in Millions					
Current Dollars	$12.7	$12.7	$23.9	$47.8	$78.9
% Change From Previous Year		(0%)	(+88%)	(+100%)	(+65%)
Constant 1988 Dollars	$13.2	$12.7	$22.8	$45.8	$75.4
% Change From Previous Year		(-4%)	(+80%)	(+101%)	(+65%)
Number of Projects	94	94	145	184	N.A.
Estimated Number of Children Served	6,953	7,030	11,173	18,850	26,000
% Change From Previous Year***		(+1%)	(+59%)	(+69%)	(+38%)
State Cost Per Child					
Current Dollars	$1,827	$1,807	$2,139	$2,536	$3,035
% Change From Previous Year		(0%)	(+18%)	(+19%)	(+20%)
1988 Constant Dollars	$1,898	$1,807	$2,041	$2,430	$2,900
% Change From Previous Year		(-4%)	(+13%)	(+19%)	(+19%)

* FY89 and FY90 figures are based on ISBE estimates.

** FY91 figures are based on ISBE's announced funding request for that year.

*** As mentioned in the Executive Summary, this number is the number of children ever served in the program. It includes, therefore, children who left a preschool project after their first day in school and who did not return, as well as children who stayed in the project anywhere from that first day to the full school year. Of course, the unreliability of this number is the basis for the unreliability of the next line in the table, the state cost per child enrolled for a full program year.

[13]The costs per child listed in this table reflect only the state's share of the cost. Some districts participating in the individual projects also contribute funds, services, and materials. Source: Staff analysis of the Illinois State Budget and material from the Illinois State Board of Education.

Significant though these amounts may be, they will not enable the state to serve all of the 90,000[14] children estimated to need this program. The number of children served has risen more slowly than the funding, from 7,030 in FY88 to 11,173 in FY89 (a 59-percent increase), to the 18,850 children expected to be served this year (a 69-percent increase), to the 26,000 proposed for next year (a 38-percent increase).[15]

The rising state expenditure per child is the simplest illustration of these trends: Between FY88 and FY89 the expenditure per child increased by 26 percent, from $1,807 to $2,276; this year it is expected to rise by 11 percent, to $2,536; and next year's proposal would yield a 20-percent increase, to $3,035 per child.

These figures raise one central question: Is the actual cost of serving each child rising with rising quality, or is the cost increasing for other reasons? The data to answer this question do not exist, but our analysis points to a number of related issues:

- It might be getting more difficult to find children whose needs can be accommodated by a school day that lasts only two and a half hours. For many children of working parents, and some children whose parents have multiple child-care responsibilities, longer program times or coordination of multiple-program days are essential. Problems of transportation, child care, and the broken continuity in the child's day can pose obstacles that are difficult, and sometimes insoluble. (Further discussion of this problem is presented in Section II.)

- In some districts, existing preschool classes are filled to capacity, no more room is available in district school buildings, and other sites are not being used. The Children at Risk program's June, 1989 report to the state legislature stated that, of the children screened and found eligible in FY87 and FY88, "From 1,200 (FY87) to more than 1,700 (FY88) had to be placed on waiting lists because of a lack of space."[16]

  The supply of, and demand for, preschool places vary from community to community, so a community-based analysis is needed to chart the gap between supply and demand. (This problem also is discussed in Section II.) Both the lack of programs for children of working parents and the school overcrowding suggest that program design and allocation may be partly responsible for the apparent failure of enrollment to keep up with the budget allocations.

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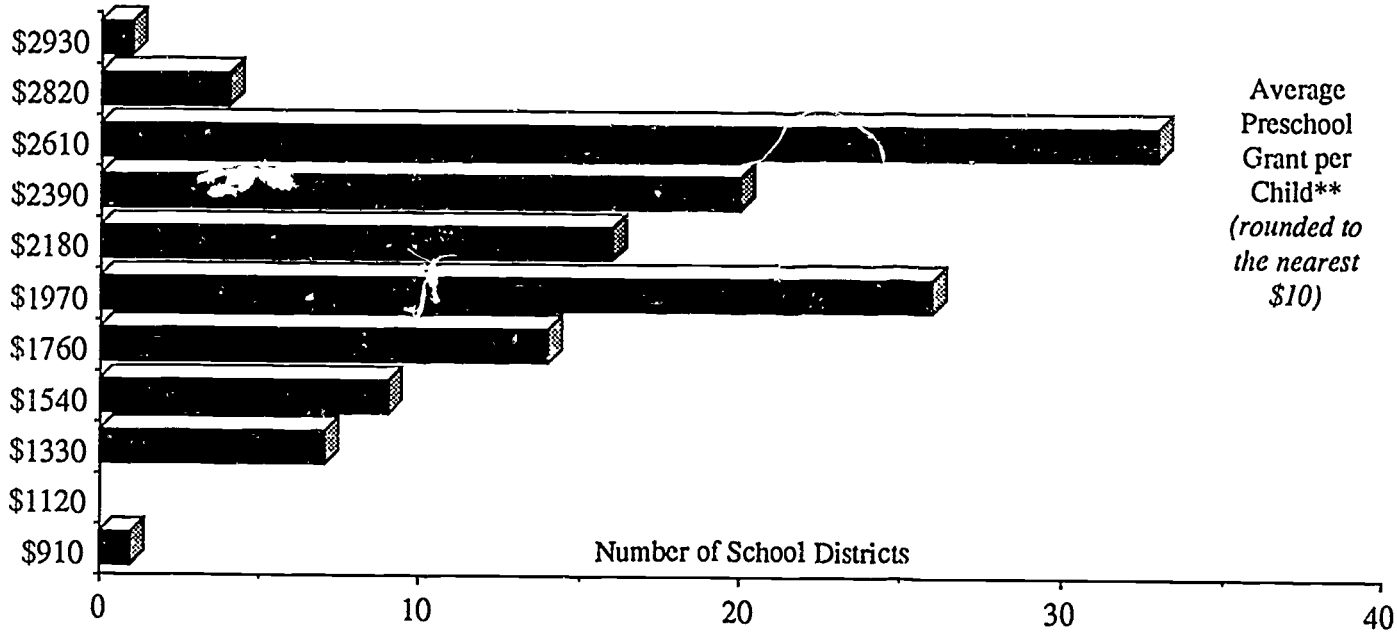
[14]This figure represents ISBE estimate of 112,000 eligible children, less the 22,000 currently served by Head Start.

[15]For a district-by district comparison of funds and recommended numbers of children served, FY88 and FY89, see Appendix B.

[16]*Illinois Prekindergarten Programs for Children at Risk of Academic Failure, A Progress Report*, Illinois State Board of Education, Office of Management and Policy Planning, June, 1989.

- Some differences in per-child expenditure reflect differences in levels of service. For example, the number of hours per week that students spend in class varies from project to project. An increasing number of projects have added five-week summer programs to their traditional eight- or nine-month school-year programs. Table 2 shows that the apparent range in spending per pupil is very large. The figures should be treated with caution, however, because the child count used in the calculation is the number of children who spent any time in the programs, not the average daily attendance for the school year.

Table 2: Amounts School Districts Spent on Preschool per Child in FY 1989*



Mean grant: $2,146; Median grant, $2,166; Standard deviation: $403

** This table describes the distribution of state funds. Some individual districts contribute additional money and in-kind resources to their preschool program.

* *Source: Staff analysis of Illinois State Board of Education data.*

- The cost information that was available for this study pertained only to the state's share of these costs. Many districts contribute extra money, time, and materials to these programs, and these factors can vary widely from project to project.

- The questions about the cost of effective preschool programs cannot be answered from the data the state currently collects. However, current state spending per child is significantly less than some model preschool programs. The very successful Perry Preschool program, started in 1962, cost $6,400 per student in 1988 constant dollars. As Table 1 showed, the state preschool program costs $2,900 in 1988 constant dollars for the 1989-90 school year.

Estimated Numbers of Children Who Need These Services

The most often-quoted estimate of the number of Illinois children who need preschool services is 112,000. That estimate was calculated by an ISBE researcher in 1984. A formula was designed to estimate the percentage of children born in any year that could be presumed to experience one or more of the risk factors that might affect the children's educational chances. The formula was based on the premises that, for any age cohort:

- all children living in poverty (18 percent of the total population)[17] could be considered at risk; and

- of the non-poor children (82 percent of the total), approximately 16 percent could be expected to be at risk.[18]

At the time, an average of the past five years' live birth counts was approximately 180,000. Thus in 1984, there were approximately two times 180,000 three- and four-year-olds (360,000), of whom 18 percent (64,800) were living in poverty; and of those not living in poverty, 16 percent (47,360) were at risk. This gave a total of 112,160 children at risk.

[17]This represents a compromise between the 17- and 19-percent formulas used in determining state aid to schools.

[18]According to Dr. Louis Ferratier, the ISBE researcher who developed the formula, this percentage was used because 16 percent of cases in a normal distribution would be expected to fall at least one standard deviation below the mean, and could therefore be considered "below the norm."

If the formula is adjusted to reflect the average number of births from 1984 to 1988 (180,318),[19] and to reflect the most recent estimates of the percentage of children in Illinois living in poverty-level families (22.8 percent),[20] the current estimate of children who qualify for the program is 127,000.

Expansion That Would Fill the Estimated Need

About 22,000 children in Illinois are served by Head Start. Assuming that most of these are in the at-risk category, that leaves 105,000 children to be served either by the state-funded program or by privately funded programs. At the expenditure per child estimated for the current school year ($2,536), it would take an allocation of more than $266 million to provide preschool for all of these children. At the expenditure indicated by next year's funding requests ($3,035 per child), it would take more than $318 million to serve all 105,000 children. The proposed federal budget for fiscal year 1991, however, contains large increases for the Head Start program, which would result in more overall preschool places in Illinois.

The decision about how quickly the state can respond to these unmet needs should be considered as part of a difficult question about priorities for preschool funds: How do we balance the need to serve all eligible children against the need to ensure that the preschool that is provided is effectively preparing children for school? David P. Weikart, president of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation and the former principal investigator for the Perry Project, recently wrote about this dilemma. His discussion concerned the national Head Start program, which currently serves only one out of five eligible children, but the question is the same for any preschool program:

> *"With limited funds, is it better to provide high-quality programs to some children, or to provide inferior programs to a larger number of children? I believe it is a poor public investment to finance preschool programs at levels that are insufficient to provide high-quality programs. If quality is sacrificed in order to serve more children, the value of the program for all the children may be undermined."*[21]

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[19]The Illinois Department of Public Health, Data and Evaluation Section reports that live birth rates in Illinois were 179,216 in 1984; 180,657 in 1985; 176,567 in 1986; 180,441 in 1987; and 184,708 in 1988.

[20]This figure cited by the Center for the Study of Social Policy, Kids Count (January, 1990), was calculated by the Children's Defense Fund using unpublished Census Bureau counts of Poor Children by State, 1983-1987.

[21]David P. Weikart, *Quality Preschool Programs: A Long-Term Social Investment*, Occasional Paper 5, Ford Foundation Project on Social Welfare and the American Future, Ford Foundation, New York, NY, 1989.

The dilemma is real. The Perry Preschool project, which produced such outstanding long-term results, had per-pupil costs of $6,400 in 1988 constant dollars. The program included both daily in-class sessions and weekly visits to each child's home. No one knows what results will be produced by less intensive programs.

Theoretically, the issue is clear. If the quality of preschool is diluted past a certain point, the short- and long-term advantages will be reduced. But we do not know at what program levels the advantages begin to disappear. A longitudinal evaluation of the state's program will shed some light on its effectiveness. (The issues of program effectiveness and program monitoring and evaluation are discussed in Section III.)

The Use of Preschool Funds

The State Board of Education collects information about how individual projects use preschool funds. The major budget categories include such items as salaries, instructional materials, transportation, and administration. The project budgeting process is the subject of more formal attention and revision by ISBE than other aspects of program planning. When a project submits its funding proposal, it includes a preliminary budget which reflects its cost estimates. If ISBE decides to fund the project, it counters with a lower -- sometimes considerably lower -- grant amount than the one requested. Usually the number of children to be served is lowered as well.[22]

The project then revises its budget based on the new grant amount and number of children, and any additional budgetary recommendations from ISBE. The revised budget is submitted, and either approved or sent back to the project for additional revision. This process is repeated until the budget meets with ISBE's approval. The proposal, which details the services to be provided, is not formally revised to match the new budget amounts.

Unfortunately, projects use different criteria in listing expenses in the different budget categories, so the information ISBE collects about preschool budgets is unreliable. Appendix C shows the apparently large variations in the way projects use preschool funds. Budget analysis is a major tool for monitoring programs, and the State Board should insist on a uniform practice for describing expense categories.

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[22]ISBE personnel state that the following factors are taken into account in deciding how much money a project should receive, and how many children it should serve: the total statewide appropriation; the project's intended services and developmental knowledge as they are reflected in the proposal; a grade given to the project's previous year's program evaluation; and the level of need in the district(s) the project serves, as determined by ISBE with a formula that uses ethnic, economic, and educational information from those districts.

Section II: Access to Services

- Children of Working Parents
- Urban and Rural Access
- Children in Chicago

Section II: Access to Services

The Children at Risk program serves children whose circumstances vary widely. For example, its enrollment criteria are based on a combination of risk factors, rather than a single factor such as family income. However, many children who would qualify for enrollment are denied entry simply because of their circumstances: the fact that their parents work and must make arrangements that will provide full-day, full-year care; or circumstances within their community or region that make it difficult or impossible for the program to provide preschool openings. In this section we examine how responsive the program is to these families.

Children of Working Parents

All but a few of the Children at Risk preschool sites are operated by school personnel, in school district facilities. They are subject to the time restrictions that union rules and traditional school schedules impose, and to administrative decisions about the length of the school day. Most of the Children at Risk preschool sites hold sessions that last 165 minutes or less, four days a week, nine months a year.

The majority of parents work. Their children need care all day long, for the work week and the work year. In 1988, half of all married mothers of infants, and half of all mothers of preschoolers, were in the work force.[23] Our projections indicate that 667,000 Illinois children between birth and age five -- 57 percent of the children in that age group -- have working mothers.[24] Some of these children's circumstances have placed them at risk. If their local preschool projects only offer partial-day, partial-week, and partial-year services, then their circumstances can also keep them from getting help.

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[23] *A Call for Action to Make Our Nation Safe for Children: A Briefing Book on the Status of American Children in 1988*, Children's Defense Fund, Washington, DC, 1988.

[24] Extrapolations from Joan Costello and Linda Bowen, *Child Day Care Resources in Illinois*, Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago, Chicago, 1985. The extrapolations are based on population projections in Mark Testa and Edward Lawlor, *The State of the Child: 1985*, Chapin Hall Center for Children, Chicago, 1985.

Children whose parents work full time experience several disadvantages in relation to partial-day preschool programs. Their parents might opt to keep them out of the program, instead arranging for day care that fits the parents' schedules but may not meet the children's developmental needs.

A second danger is that parents might make multiple arrangements that will add up to a full day's care, but will deny children the continuity that is important to their development. Children in part-time preschool make three or more moves a day between the time their parents drop them off at school and the time they are picked up from their late afternoon caregivers. In recent years, the early childhood community has placed increasing emphasis on the importance of continuity in children's lives.

The school-based nature of the Children at Risk projects often prevents their remaining open beyond traditional school hours and months. The impetus to serve more children often prompts projects to hold more than one session each day, cutting in half the amount of time each child can spend there. And in many projects, preschool classes are held only four days a week, with the fifth reserved for home visits, staff training, and planning.

In contrast, day care centers organize their schedules to accommodate working parents. Traditionally, the difference between preschool and day care has been a difference in purpose. Preschool is aimed at developing children's ability to learn and understand. It requires a larger concentration of resources and does not have to last a full day in order to enhance the child's development. The traditional purpose of day care has been to keep children safe, comfortable, and happy during the hours in which their families cannot take care of them. This distinction is imperfect: many day care centers also incorporate activities that develop children's skills.

The traditional distinction, however, obscures the fact that many children need both of these services, and that their effective coordination will make a considerable difference to the children and their families. A failure to coordinate them is a failure to acknowledge the combined realities of the practical needs of working parents and the developmental needs of their children.

In any community, there are a number of options for combining day care and preschool. Preschool services can be provided in day care homes and day care centers; some projects, such as the one administered by Elgin, have done this. Day care providers can be trained in developmentally appropriate preschool concepts and practices, and preschool programs can be subcontracted to them. Or they can hire appropriately trained people for part of the day. Preschool sessions can be held at the beginning of the working day, and safe transportation provided to day care centers for the remainder of the day, so that children can attend both programs with the minimum of disruption.

The distinction between preschool and day care must break down if we are to provide either effectively:

> *The misconception that early childhood education and child care can be discrete services is fast becoming a thing of the past. Programs for young children cannot be one or the other; any early childhood program provides both education and care. These two functions are inextricably bound together; children cannot be well cared for without learning, and they cannot be educated well without being properly cared for.*[25]

Urban and Rural Access

Illinois is a diverse state, and different school districts encounter different problems in making sure that eligible children can enroll in preschool. In many urban areas, for example, school buildings are already overcrowded, and cannot accommodate preschool classes. Some facilities that do have space are beyond safe and cost-effective renovation. Because the Children at Risk program relies so heavily on school-based projects, the space shortage presents a formidable obstacle.

Urban areas also exhibit the greatest concentrations of the risk factors that endanger children's educational development -- factors such as poverty, limited English proficiency, and parents' relative youth and low educational attainment. It is, therefore, particularly important that we solve the space problem in our cities. The State Board of Education should encourage projects to subcontract their educational programs to qualified not-for-profit organizations, to provide services in day care centers, and to continue to expand home-based services. (Rockford, for example, serves 100 children in home programs, where project staff go to each child's home once week for an extended visit.)

In rural areas, by contrast, the greater problem is distance. Many children live too far away from central preschool sites to be bused to those projects. It makes little sense to drive children to a preschool project that may be an hour or even several hours away from their homes. But many children in rural areas also experience the poverty, language barriers, low parental age and educational levels that city children face. In such areas preschool must come to the child. Some projects could use vans that provide classrooms on wheels for small groups of children, and others could use itinerant in-home preschool teachers.

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[25]Anne Mitchell, "Old Baggage, New Visions: Shaping Policy for Early Childhood Programs," *p. 27.*

Children in Chicago

Many of the problems found in other urban projects are particularly acute in Chicago. By far the largest Children at Risk program, Chicago receives about 44 percent of total program funds, and is expected to serve 34 percent of program children this year. In 1989, Chicago had 178 preschool classrooms in its project, providing morning and afternoon sessions to different groups of children. The structure that administers preschool is much larger and more sophisticated than that of any other project, a factor that sometimes promotes progress, and sometimes impedes it.

Equal access to preschool programs is a serious issue in Chicago. While the Chicago Board of Education attempts to balance the distribution of the state-funded Children at Risk program, taking into account the distribution of its parent-child centers and the federally funded Head Start program, several other Board policies reduce its success.

The Board's traditional refusal to subcontract educational programs to qualified not-for-profits (one is subcontracted this fiscal year), combines with the shortage of space and overcrowding in particular areas of the city to deny some children access to preschool. Public school buildings are seriously overcrowded in many areas of the city, including predominantly Hispanic, predominantly African-American, and multi-ethnic areas. Table 3 (Page 25) shows that 14 out of the 20 community areas in Chicago with the greatest need for additional preschool places have overcrowded schools.

While subcontracting requires the enlistment of qualified not-for-profit organizations which have space that can be licensed for preschool, it is a sensible answer to the overcrowding issue. It also has the advantage of encouraging a variety of approaches to preschool education, including a greater receptivity to working parents than the Board of Education has shown. Since the inception of the Children at Risk program, the Chicago Board of Education has consciously focused on the children of non-working parents, to the effective exclusion of the children of working parents.

Chicago should plan to subcontract twenty percent of its preschool funds for the 1990-91 school year, and the State Board of Education should encourage this change to permit greater access for the children of working parents.

The Chicago Board of Education should also, in keeping with the spirit of the Chicago School Reform Act of 1988, encourage local school councils in elementary schools to develop preschool programs that reflect the particular needs and resources of their communities.

Table 3: The Twenty Community Areas in Chicago With the Greatest Deficit of Preschool Places and the Number of the Communities' Schools That are Overcrowded*

Community Area	Estimated Number of Poor Children 3-5 Years Old	Number of Head Start Places	Number of Child Parent Center Places	Number of Children at Risk Places	Total Preschool Places	Deficit of Preschool Places	Percent Deficit	Number of Overcrowded Elementary Schools
Chicago Lawn	651	0	0	34	34	617	94.8	3
North Center	386	0	0	34	34	352	91.2	0
Rogers Park	561	80	0	0	80	481	85.7	2
Logan Square	1740	154	0	102	256	1484	85.3	3
Albany Park	544	80	0	34	114	430	79.0	2
Humbolt Park	2142	280	0	170	450	1692	79	2
South Lawndale	1622	332	0	102	434	1188	73.2	9
Austin	2896	640	0	170	810	2086	72.0	5
West Englewood	1517	260	0	170	430	1087	71.7	1
Douglass	1326	380	0	34	414	912	69.0	0
Grand Boulevard	2109	400	272	102	774	1335	63.3	1
New City	1373	314	170	34	518	855	62.3	2
Greater Grand Crossing	779	240	0	68	308	471	60.5	0
South Shore	1230	445	0	136	581	649	52.8	2
Englewood	1667	320	170	306	796	871	52.3	1
Lower West Side	988	364	0	170	534	454	46.0	6
Near West Side	2230	878	306	102	1286	944	42.3	0
West Town	2041	848	170	240	1258	783	38.4	5
North Lawndale	1936	525	578	102	1205	731	37.8	0
Near North	1384	374	510	0	884	500	36.1	0

* This table uses the number of low-income children in a community as an indicator of the number of children who qualify for publicly supported preschool. It then lists the major publicly funded preschool programs (Head Start, Child Parent Centers, and Children at Risk) and indicates the gap between the need for and the availability of preschool places. The last column indicates the number of elementary schools in each community area that are overcrowded. The Chicago Board of Education's refusal to adopt a vigorous policy of subcontracting preschool programs to qualified not-for-profit organizations is a serious hindrance to these communities' efforts to obtain sufficient preschool places.

** The community areas are listed in order of the percentage gap between the number of preschoolers in the area who qualify for preschool and the supply of preschool places.

Source: Staff reworking of data from City of Chicago Department of Human Services *1989 Community Needs Assessment. Head Start,* and the Office of Equal Educational Opportunity, Chicago Public Schools, 1989.

Section III: Program Effectiveness

- Elements of Effective Preschool
- Measuring the Effects of the Children at Risk Program
- Long-Term Evidence of Effectiveness

Section III: Program Effectiveness

The purpose of the Children at Risk of Educational Failure program is to prepare for regular school those children who would otherwise arrive at kindergarten or first grade significantly less well prepared than most students. The legislature approved this program because it thought the program could effectively prepare young children for school. This Section examines some of the elements of effective preschool; discusses the systems ISBE has established for monitoring, supporting, and documenting program effectiveness; and makes recommendations for the improvement of those systems.

Elements of Effective Preschool

Early childhood researchers and trained practitioners share a high level of conceptual agreement about appropriate early childhood developmental practices. With some variation, most incorporate Piagetian principles as developed in the High/Scope model and refined by time, experience, and the ultimate teachers -- the children themselves. The key characteristics of effective preschool are described below.

- **Good Preschool is Developmentally Appropriate**

  Developmentally appropriate preschool does not seek to teach children facts and figures by rote, but rather helps develop their ability to integrate information, to grasp concepts in concrete terms, to make decisions, to create solutions, and to feel good about themselves.

  In its published guidelines -- perhaps the most often cited book in the early childhood field -- the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) defines "developmental appropriateness" as having two components: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness.[26]

[26]Sue Bredekamp, ed., *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8.*

In an age-appropriate program, teachers and aides have realistic expectations of children, and let them do things they enjoy, in environments that will enhance their enjoyment and exploration. An individually appropriate program recognizes that "each child is a unique person with an individual pattern and timing of growth, as well as individual personality, learning style, and family background. Both the curriculum and the adults' interactions with children should be responsive to individual differences."[27] Teachers and aides work to develop children's social and cooperative skills, but they also accept and encourage their individuality, and help them keep their curiosity alive.

A developmentally appropriate program works from the principle that understanding is an acquired skill. Integration of information begins on the ground level, with the connection of concrete things and experiences. Young children learn by doing, by playing, by experimenting, by creating. They learn by talking about things, asking and answering questions, and making decisions. In these programs, children have opportunities to work alone and in small groups, to learn independence and cooperation. They plan their own activities, carry out their plans, and review what they have done.

Good preschool environments are safe, clean, and comfortable. They invite exploration, provide the materials and equipment necessary for large and small muscle development, and support the sense of security and independence that effective preschool is designed to build.

Classrooms contain "learning centers," each the home of a particular type of activity, with materials arranged within children's reach, to invite their free choice and exploration. Furniture is child-sized, with enough soft, home-like furniture (little couches and bean bags, thick rugs and pillows) to help children feel secure and comfortable.

Adults are there to encourage them to imagine, to explore, to try new things, to make decisions, and to solve problems. They develop children's language skills by asking and answering questions, both formally and informally. The adults set clear limits and treat the children with warmth and respect. They understand that, unless the children feel secure, highly valued, and equal to the task at hand, their development will suffer, to the detriment of future learning.

[27]Sue Bredekamp, ed., p. 11.

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Preschool that lacks the appropriate play and stimulation will be less valuable to children. Preschool that puts too much emphasis on academic learning, rote memorization, and highly structured classrooms will end up discouraging creativity, increasing children's anxiety about achievement, and reducing their progress. An appropriate preschool program "features child-initiated activities. This kind of curriculum accepts children at whatever developmental level they are on. It provides ample opportunity for children to solve problems independently, to initiate meaningful conversations with peers and adults, and to explore materials and interests on their own."[28]

- **Effective Preschool Promotes Real Family Involvement**

The benefits of children's preschool experience are affected by the degree to which their parents become involved in the programs. For example, parents who take part in preschool activities may repeat these activities at home, and learn new ways of encouraging their children's creativity. Or staff members who make in-home visits can suggest activities that encourage the children's development. A large part of the Perry Project's success was due to its high degree of parent involvement. Although it provided only two and a half hours in class each day, each child's home was visited for an hour and a half each week.

Other studies have focused on the achievement levels of children whose parents have become actively involved, and compared them with the achievement of those whose parents have been only minimally involved. The 1985 Head Start synthesis reported that children tended to do better on tests if their parents were heavily involved in the programs.[29]

No matter how strong their desire that their children receive the best chances, parents often face significant challenges of their own. This is particularly the case for parents who live in highly stressed or disadvantaged circumstances. They may lack time and resources; they may not know about the current developmental concepts; they may hold unrealistic expectations about their children's behavior, and feel that they are failing as parents.

A good preschool program acknowledges that the family is the most important element in the child's life. It brings the family into the process, through home visits by preschool personnel, participation by parents in class and at special events, toy and book lending libraries, accessible meetings where parents can talk about their experiences and learn about child development, referral to services they might need in their communities, and chances for parents to get involved in the program decision-making structure. The family enriches the preschool experience, and preschool enriches the child's experience at home.

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[28]David Weikart, *Quality Preschool Programs: A Long-Term Social Investment, p. 18.*

[29]Ruth Hubbell McKey *et. al., The Impact of Head Start on Children, Families and Communities, p. 11.*

It is not always easy to achieve a significant level of parental involvement in a preschool program. Working parents and parents with multiple child-care responsibilities have little spare time, and some projects don't encourage their involvement. Some projects offer parent activities and in-class volunteer opportunities only during the working day, and virtually all conduct home visits only during weekday hours. For working parents, their responsibilities often keep them from volunteering in class, one of the most useful forms of involvement. Even full-day preschool classes would not solve that problem.

However, one difference between a more effective parent program and a less effective one is a project's willingness to acknowledge such obstacles, its will to overcome them, and its creativity in trying new solutions to engage parents' interest. Some projects make special efforts to include working parents, by holding meetings and parent classes in the evenings and on weekends, and by providing transportation for parents who need it and child care during meeting times.

Sometimes community involvement can provide the key to family involvement. Some of the projects studied provide volunteer opportunities for senior citizens and high school child-care students. The projects become better known and more highly valued in their communities. Community leaders can also become involved in the programs, and help increase parents' enthusiasm.

Another element that is essential to parent involvement is the way in which project personnel regard parents. Many parents have not had the opportunities that staff have had to learn about developmental concepts and practices; they sometimes, for example, put pressure on staff to give their children the kind of rote instruction that would prove counterproductive.[30] There can be a strong temptation to look at those parents as clients or students -- or even as children -- rather than as partners in the educational process.[31]

The success that personnel have in overcoming that temptation will determine the success of their programs. Parents have a keen eye for condescension, and neither trust nor respect can survive if they are not returned. Parents' success in becoming the best advocates for their children's education will depend on their ability to learn about their children's development, refine and learn to trust their own judgement, and exercise real authority in the educational processes that affect their children's lives.

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[30]Sue Bredekamp, ed., *Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Programs Serving Children From Birth Through Age 8, p.* 11.

[31]Beginning in FY90, the ISBE office that administers the Children at Risk program also will administer a similar system of competitive grants for pilot training programs for parents of children from birth through kindergarten. The enabling legislation targets this training toward, but does not limit enrollment to, first-time parents of children other than those considered to be at risk. It remains to be seen whether the pilot districts will include parents of at-risk children in their enrollment.

- **Good Preschool Addresses the Needs of Limited-English-Proficient Children:**

  For children with limited English proficiency, good preschool requires both consistent exposure to English and development of skills in their native languages. Respect for and curiosity about all cultures -- particularly those of the children enrolled -- should be reflected in preschool activities and decor. The State Board should publicize examples of effective multi-cultural programs.

  Children whose primary language is not English have an undeniable need for the advantages of preschool, but their circumstances pose a difficult problem. There is an acute shortage of trained early childhood personnel who are proficient in languages other than English. In many urban areas, the demand is overwhelming; in rural areas, the supply ranges from minimal to nonexistent. Some projects supplement their English-speaking staff with volunteers who speak the needed languages. The State Board of Education and local school districts should assess the need for bilingual early childhood personnel and devise strategies and incentives for recruiting and training them.

- **Good Preschool Recognizes the Impact of Health on Children's Learning:**

  The Head Start program performance standards recognize the connection between children's health and their capacity to learn. The standards include guidelines on the assessment of children's health status and on the provision of health and nutritional services.

  Many of the children who are eligible for the Children at Risk program would also benefit from the health and nutritional services provided by Head Start. Hungry children, and children with untreated illness, will learn less in a preschool program than healthy, well-fed children. The State Board of Education should develop guidelines for the provision of such services to the children who attend Children at Risk preschool services.[32]

Measuring the Effects of the Children at Risk Program

The Children at Risk program should be evaluated in two different time-frames: the State Board of Education should know whether individual preschool classrooms are currently operating according to best practices, and the state should know whether individual sites and the program as a whole are producing long-term improvements in the educational attainment and life-chances of former preschool children.

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[32]Children at Risk projects are required to perform health screening as part of their eligibility screening procedures. They are also encouraged to link families with appropriate health care providers, but no program-wide standards have been established, and no follow-up information is collected.

The enabling legislation requires the State Board to develop and provide evaluation tools to test program children for school readiness prior to age five, and to report to the General Assembly every three years on the results and progress of students enrolled in the program and an assessment of individual projects.

The state has not established an effective long-term evaluation of the program. It has, however, several ways of assessing the quality of the individual preschool sites, and these are discussed below.

- **Monitoring Existing Preschool Classrooms**

  ISBE has two strategies for monitoring existing projects: (1) the review of the proposals submitted to the State Board by school districts who are seeking state funds for preschool projects, and (2) the evaluation of the individual projects or classrooms. Neither of these two devices are well enough constructed to be effective monitoring tools.

  The State Board's main source of information on the individual projects' intentions, and on the activities in progress in the current program year, is their narrative proposals, which constitute their request for state preschool funding. In the current fiscal year the ISBE received 184 proposals.[33] These proposals are often vague, dense, and confusing. There is little consistency of format and location of information. It is often difficult to find any one piece of information in a particular proposal, and some lack key pieces of information that would be useful to ISBE in its funding decisions. This lack of consistency makes it virtually impossible for the state to compare proposals with one another, and difficult to detect year-to-year changes in the same project.

  When proposed budgets are revised downward, as they consistently are to meet ISBE's funding levels, the proposals themselves are not revised to reflect the levels of service intended. This leaves no record of the details of the final agreement between ISBE and the preschool project. In particular, it leaves no signed contract for the final numbers of children the project has agreed to serve for the agreed budget figure.

  ISBE could easily design a clear and comprehensive proposal form, on which each project would record its proposed numbers, procedures, and services. As the projects' budgets are revised downward, revised proposal forms could be submitted, giving ISBE an up-to-date record of each project's intentions. Uniformity and clear information that could be stored easily on a computer database would allow comparisons and analyses that would help ISBE staff make funding decisions.

[33]Last spring, districts submitted three-year proposals covering fiscal years 90 through 92. Approval for the first year did not ensure funding in subsequent years. In previous years, they submitted separate proposals for each year's operation.

ISBE could still encourage narrative sections to test the projects' ability to articulate early childhood concepts. However, an ability to discuss these concepts and practices is not always the most reliable indication of a project's ability to carry them out. Many projects have their proposals completed by professional proposal writers, and the most eloquent projects are not necessarily the most effective.

The projects are currently operating on three year proposals. This gives ISBE the opportunity to devise and field test useful proposal forms in 1991, in time for the regular three-year re-application process in 1992.

- **The Current Monitoring and Evaluation Systems**[34]

The state monitors its preschool sites through a process called "program review." The reviews are conducted annually by early childhood consultants retained by ISBE.[35] The sites are given significant notice before the visits. When a project has more sites than the consultants are available to review, unless ISBE has requested that a particular site be visited, the project chooses which sites are to be monitored.

ISBE suggests that the consultants spend at least an hour at each site, and that they arrive before children are brought to school, to observe the greeting process. However, those and other scheduling decisions are left to the consultants' discretion.

Review information, including rating scales and, in most cases, written comments, is recorded on evaluation forms created by ISBE, called Prekindergarten Program Review Forms. The basic form was changed for each fiscal year covered by this report.

Completed reviews are read by ISBE early childhood staff, and copies are given to the reviewed projects. When the reviewers describe problems in a preschool project, ISBE encourages the project to obtain technical assistance from a consultant, generally the person who did the review. The consultant can be paid with Children at Risk funds, either out of or in addition to the project's grant.

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[34]For the purpose of this report, "monitoring" is the constant process of ensuring that preschools are run according to best practice, and "evaluation" is the process of determining whether the preschools are having the intended effect.

[35]Until the present fiscal year (FY90), this process has not been funded with state preschool dollars, but has come out of the same federal Chapter II allotment that supports the ISBE office that administers early childhood programs. As of this year, funds will be added to each district's budget to cover program review consulting costs.

- **The Current Monitoring Form**

The scaling system used in the ISBE program review form is not adequate for the tasks of recording a concrete description of the project and allowing comparison with other projects. The questions on the review are too vague and the response categories are often inappropriate. For example, one question asks whether there were appropriate materials and equipment and whether there were developmental activities. Such general questions allow for a wide variety of judgments by different raters and fail to give a clear picture of what was actually happening in the school. The actual rating scale was also inappropriate. Questions like the one cited were to be answered on a five-point scale which was described as follows: 1 is "Not Started," 2 is "Just Beginning," 3 is "Progressing Satisfactorily, 4 is "Achieved," and 5 is "Exemplary." These scales do not ground the evaluators' responses in any standards of what constitutes adequate or inadequate performance.

There is nothing in the forms to force the reviewers to be specific, or to put comments in their reviews. Of the approximately 140 Program Review forms completed in the nine sample projects we studied, some years' forms had no comments, even when more than one site was reviewed. Given the ambiguity of the scaling system, the comments are often the only valuable information in the review forms. If they are missing, it is difficult to draw any valid conclusion about the project.

- **An Effective Monitoring Form**

ISBE should replace its current ambiguous review form with one that is more specific and more easily read and interpreted. The *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale* (ECERS), developed at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, is one such scale. The differences between the ISBE form and the ECERS form are described below for the sake of comparison.

The ECERS scale contains quite specific detail on elements needed in effective early childhood education, and its scoring system is entirely dependent on the absence or presence of those elements. There is, consequently, a greater likelihood that different raters would rate a given classroom in the same way, and that scale scores actually distinguish between classrooms of different quality.[36] For each item (e.g., "Informal use of language"), the scale's explanation section gives a very specific definition of "Inadequate," "Minimal," "Good," and "Excellent" ratings, and allows scores that fall between those categories, for programs which partially meet the higher rating definitions.

[36]The ECERS scale has been tested for validity and reliability and the tests support the use of the instrument. The ISBE measures have not been tested.

The instructions permit the reader some certainty in determining what, for example, a rating of "Good" in "Informal use of language" means. The guide explains that a "Good" rating on that topic indicates "staff-child conversations are frequent. Language is primarily used by staff to exchange information with children and for social interaction. Children are asked 'why, how, what if' questions, requiring longer and more complex answers." To be rated "Excellent," the guide says "staff makes conscious effort to have an informal conversation with each child every day. Staff verbally expands on ideas presented by children ..." An "Inadequate" program is one where "Language outside of group times is primarily used by staff to control children's behavior and manage routines."[37]

By comparison, the ISBE FY89 Program Review Form contains only one very general question which relates directly to the use of language ("The integrated curriculum includes appropriate activities which promote child development in the area of language") and one which relates indirectly ("Staff encourage independence, interdependence, and reasoning and questioning skills"). Neither question mentions informal use of language, or pins down the details that would demonstrate a project's level of quality in this area.

The ECERS scoring form also provides space next to each item on the scale for comments about it, giving the reviewer an immediate forum for any additional details about the score, and thereby giving the reader a more comprehensive understanding of the program. The scale booklet includes a summary sheet that allows for an easy comparison of the classroom's current rating on the different items with the ratings made at previous visits.

While a rating tool as detailed as the ECERS form will take longer to complete than the current ISBE form, it permits a person other than the evaluator/rater to understand in quite specific detail the quality of the preschool education offered in each classroom. The ISBE scale, in contrast, gives no useful detail to anyone other than the person who conducted the site evaluation.

- **Timing of Program Reviews**

Reviews will have a greater impact on the current generation of preschool children if the results are returned to the project early enough to allow the project to implement change in the same school year. The State Board's monitoring consultants are currently trained in early winter, and make their project visits in late winter and early spring. By the time their results are returned to ISBE, and recommendations for improvement are made to the projects, the school year is almost over.

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[37]Thelma Harms and Richard M. Clifford, *Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale*, Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, NC, (see Page 21).

ISBE should hold training sessions for consultant reviewers as early in the fall as possible, and schedule the review visits in November. This timetable would allow program improvements in the same school year the review was conducted.

- **Regular Training and Assistance**

  This reactive stance -- recommending training and technical assistance in response to problems found in the projects -- is not enough. Preschool staff need regular training and technical assistance, and this help should be accessible to projects everywhere in the state. The State Board currently offers several training opportunities but should survey the projects to see what additional assistance is needed.[38]

  The Children at Risk program also needs to support developmentally appropriate practices beyond its own projects, in the kindergarten and early elementary school classrooms where many preschool children will find their newly acquired understanding overwhelmed by the rigid approaches of traditional education.

Long-Term Evidence of Effectiveness

The landmark Perry Preschool Project has been tracking its effects on children for 27 years. In that project, the most painstaking methods of data collection, analysis, and follow up were used. Perry's current status is due in part to its impressive results, but also to the care with which those results were documented.

The Children at Risk program currently provides neither the intensive levels of service provided to the Perry preschool children nor the careful types of analysis and follow-up used in that project. Illinois cannot presume that the results of the Children at Risk program will be as spectacular as those of the Perry program. The state will not know the capabilities and limits of its preschool program until it sponsors an analysis of longitudinal data on the effects of current levels of services on preschool children as they pass through elementary and high school, and compares this information with data on non-preschool control groups.

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[38]Training is available from a number of sources, including: conferences of the Illinois Association for the Education of Young Children and regional arms of that organization, such as the Chicago Association for the Education of Young Children; programs developed by the Illinois Association for Successful Child Development; some conferences and training programs held at regional Educational Service Centers; and Children at Risk orientation sessions by two of the larger projects (Peoria Heights and Murphysboro), which open their sessions to personnel from other districts.

The State Board of Education does not, of course, need to wait for the results of a longitudinal evaluation to begin to modify existing preschool programs. A rigorous study of preschoolers' performance in first grade would begin to distinguish the more and less effective projects.

Under the current evaluation system each individual project chooses its own testing instruments, and the State Board does not collect pre- and post-program test data on its preschool students. Instead, ISBE collects preschool teachers' assessments of children's readiness for kindergarten; and kindergarten, and grade school teachers' assessments of their behavior and learning skills.[39] The bases for these evaluations are left to the individual teachers. ISBE also collects information about whether or not the children were promoted after kindergarten, retained in grade, or referred to special education. The State Board plans to continue collecting this data on program children as long as the children's records are accessible.

The State Board should, however, select a finer instrument that would be good for pre- and post-program testing purposes, require that each preschool project use that instrument, and collect and analyze the results. It should also use waiting lists to establish control groups in representative sites, and collect control group scores on the same test. While a minimum of testing is necessary to describe the progress of preschool children, the amount of testing should be kept to that bare minimum. Too many children are exposed to too many tests in our school systems, and this overtesting should not be allowed to extend to preschool. "Teaching to the test" would, in particular, destroy the supportive atmosphere necessary in an effective preschool.

Recent amendments to the preschool legislation provide that five percent of Children at Risk funds be used by individual preschool projects and universities for research on this program. These studies should focus on longitudinal effects, on experimental sites which test and stretch the limits of the program, and on sites which try creative solutions to the problems discussed in this Report.

[39]In June, 1989, the State Board of Education published a progress report on the Children at Risk Program. That report is candid about the limitations of the state's current evaluation.

Section IV: Issues for Further Study and Action

- Screening Systems
- Integration of Children with Disabilities
- Increased Collaboration Among Early Childhood Programs

Section IV: Issues for Further Study and Action

In addition to the issues discussed in the preceding sections, the State Board, its preschool projects, and the surrounding early childhood community should begin to address three additional issues. All three have a significant impact on the success of the Children at Risk and other preschool programs, and on the lives of the children those programs serve.

Screening Systems

Children are chosen for the Children at Risk program in screening sessions, conducted by teams that usually include social workers, teachers, aides, nurses or nurses' aides, and other personnel, depending on the individual project's procedures. Each child is given vision and hearing tests, and one or more of a number of early childhood screening instruments (tests).

The parents are interviewed or given questionnaires to gather information about the child's economic, cultural, language, and family circumstances. In a variety of locally developed procedures, early childhood test results and family information are taken into account in deciding whether children need the program, do not need the program, or need further testing for possible placement in special education classes.

The screening instruments used to test children for the program vary from project to project, as do the cut-off scores used in determining whether children will be considered eligible for the program or referred for further testing and possible special education placement. Most of the instruments used were originally developed to identify existing developmental disabilities and delays.

Screening procedures also vary widely, from the quiet and orderly screening appointments conducted in some projects to the noisy gymnasiums full of children gathered in others. Some projects' proposals indicate the use of several instruments in the screening process, which leaves the question of whether they might be doing too much testing. There also is wide variation in the numbers of children screened, the percentages found eligible, and the percentages enrolled.[40]

ISBE should examine these instruments, cut-off scores, and procedures carefully, set system-wide standards, and support and monitor those standards. ISBE should compare the numbers of children screened by each project with the availability of preschool openings, and decide what is the true purpose of screening.

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[40]These differences are difficult to assess because some districts combine special education and preschool screening.

All Our Children Can Make the Grade

If the purpose is to identify *all* children at risk regardless of ability to serve them, then what is the benefit to children who have been pronounced "at-risk" but given no means of addressing that risk? Are their families getting negative perceptions of their children's potential, and being set up for frustration? Screening results are retained within the districts which administer the projects; depending on district policy, they may be passed on to kindergarten teachers. Will those results follow the children who were found eligible but were not served, and affect their educational success by lowering teachers' expectations of them? Or can the results be used to direct the parents to other sources of educational support for their children?

Integration of Children With Disabilities

The Children at Risk program has not yet addressed the issue of integrating children with disabilities into its classes. In cooperation with the other programs and agencies set up to provide services to children between the ages of three and five, the Children at Risk program should begin to assess these children's needs, and the role it can play in meeting those needs. For example, the integration of children with physical disabilities into a regular preschool classroom is different from the inappropriate practice of placing children who need special education services in a classroom that lacks those services.

The right of all children to free, appropriate public education within the least restrictive environment is clearly established. Children with disabilities have a right to be educated in the least restrictive environments that are developmentally appropriate for them. In many cases these environments would be Children at Risk classes. The State Board should encourage and monitor the enrollment of children with disabilities into preschool classrooms. It will benefit both children with disabilities and their peers to open each up to the other's world as early as possible, to help each avoid the types of prejudice and discomfort that have plagued the preceding generations.

Increased Collaboration Among Early Childhood Programs

Children at Risk, Head Start, and the Department of Children and Family day care are the largest providers of early childhood services in Illinois (some other children are served by private day care and preschool). While the preschool programs emphasize child development and the day care programs emphasize full-day care, the programs serve quite similar children in three separate systems. There are several reasons for slowly merging the work of the three systems for improving the overall quality of preschool in the state.

There are large disparities in resources per child in the three systems. Salaries of Children at Risk staff are much higher than those of Head Start staff, who in turn earn more than day care staff. The average salary for Head Start staff working in not-for-profit private organizations in Chicago is $12,500, compared with the $32,000 average salary of Children at Risk staff employed by the Chicago Board of Education. These disparities lead to a high turnover of staff in the poorly funded programs, and competition for staff among all three programs. The early childhood field experiences a constant migration of personnel from the lower-paid programs to the better-paid programs. Even the relatively well-funded Children at Risk program loses employees to other fields that offer more financial security. The high staff turnover affects the programs and the children.[41]

The two preschool programs also compete for children and for space. With so many eligible children not attending preschool programs, this particular competition is a waste of energy and resources.

While DCFS day care personnel are generally not trained to conduct preschool, they are obviously critical influences on the poverty-level children they look after, and those children would benefit from programs designed to enrich their development.

The state must move toward providing the appropriate preschool experience to all eligible children in child-care programs, whether they are officially preschool or day care programs. Moreover, the state should examine the wisdom of permitting two parallel preschool programs, one federally funded and the other state funded. Some states, for example, have used state preschool money to expand the federally funded Head Start money, rather than build a parallel service system. In the near future the state should develop a plan to use the resources of the three programs in concert, to avoid inequities in funding and in program standards.

As a first step, some Children at Risk money should be allocated to publicly funded day care centers, to provide developmental enrichment to this group of children and training for day care staff.

State-level leadership of the many community-wide preschool and day care coalitions represents the early childhood field's best chance to improve the experiences of the children it serves. As the National Association of State Boards of Education's Task Force on Early Childhood Education stated in its 1988 report:

> *We have a diverse, underfunded, and uncoordinated system for delivering programs to young children. Public education leaders can be a powerful and constructive force for strengthening this system. If they act in partnership with other early childhood programs, our chances for increasing and maximizing resources and quality in all settings that serve young children will be greatly improved.*[42]

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[41]Sharon L. Kagan, "Early Care and Education: Tackling the Tough Issues," *Phi Delta Kappan*, February, 1989.

[42]*Right From the Start*, National Association of State Boards of Education, Alexandria, VA, 1988.

Appendices

Appendix A: Children at Risk of Academic Failure Legislation

Appendix B: Project-by-Project Comparisons, Funding and Recommended Numbers of Children, FY88 and FY89

Appendix C: Variations in Projects' use of Preschool Funds by Major Budget Categories

Appendix A: Children at Risk of Academic Failure Legislation (as amended 1989)

SCHOOL DISTRICTS—PRESCHOOL MODEL RESEARCH-TRAINING PROGRAMS

PUBLIC ACT 86-316

H.B. 604

AN ACT to amend "The School Code", approved March 18, 1961, as amended, by changing Section 2-3.71.

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly:

Section 1. Section 2-3.71 of "The School Code", approved March 18, 1961, as amended, is amended to read as follows:

(Ch. 122, par. 2-3.71) [S.H.A. ch. 122, ¶ 2-3.71]

§ 2-3.71. Grants for preschool educational and related model research-training programs. (a) The State Board of Education shall implement and administer a grant program under the provisions of this subsection which shall consist ~~consisting~~ of grants to public school districts to conduct preschool educational programs for children ages 3 to 5 which include a parent education component. A public school district which receives grants under this subsection ~~Section~~, may subcontract with a private school, not-for-profit corporation or other governmental agency to conduct a preschool educational program. All teachers of such programs shall either hold early childhood teaching certificates issued under Article 21 [1] or Section 34-83 of this Code or shall meet the requirements for supervising a day care center under the Child Care Act of 1969, as amended.[2]

~~(b)~~ The State Board of Education shall provide the primary source of funding through appropriations for this program. Except as otherwise provided in subsection (b), such funds shall be distributed for the benefit of children who because of their home and community environment are subject to such language, cultural, economic and like disadvantages that they have been determined as a result of screening procedures to be at risk of academic failure. Such screening procedures shall be based on criteria established by the State Board of Education.

~~(c)~~ The State Board of Education shall develop and provide evaluation tools, including tests, that school districts may use to evaluate children for school readiness prior to age 5. The State Board of Education shall require school districts to obtain consent from the parents or guardians of children before any evaluations are conducted. The State Board of Education shall encourage local school districts to evaluate the population of preschool children in their districts and provide preschool programs, pursuant to this subsection ~~Section~~, where appropriate.

~~(d)~~ The State Board of Education shall report to the General Assembly by July 1, 1989 and every 3 years thereafter, on the results and progress of students who were enrolled in preschool educational programs, including an assessment of which programs have been most successful in promoting academic excellence and alleviating academic failure. The State Board of Education shall assess the academic progress of all students who have been enrolled in preschool educational programs.

(b) Up to 5% of the amounts annually appropriated for purposes of preschool educational programs under this Section may be used by the State Board of Education for grants to school districts and public institutions of higher education to establish and implement coordinated model programs which include both a research component in early childhood development and psychology and a personnel training component in preferred teaching methodologies in effective preschool educational programs. The State Board of Education shall by rule establish criteria for the content, objectives and manner of implementing model programs which may qualify for grant awards under this subsection. Such criteria may include considerations of the ability of a proposed model program to serve children from preschool and early childhood age groupings, including children therefrom who are or may not be at risk, and of the ability of the proposed model program to incorporate program site student teaching, for early childhood certification purposes, of the children actually served by the model program. The State Board of Education shall establish standards within its rules for the form of grant applications submitted under this subsection and for evaluating those applications against the qualifying criteria established as provided in this subsection for model program content, objectives and implementation.

[1] Paragraph 21-1 et seq. of this chapter.
[2] Chapter 23, ¶ 2211 et seq.

Section 2. This Act takes effect upon becoming a law. [S.H.A. ch. 122, ¶ 2-3.71 note]

Approved: August 30, 1989

Effective: August 30, 1989

Appendix B: Project-by-Project Comparisons,
Funding and Recommended Numbers of Children
Fiscal Years 88 and 89

This table includes all projects which were funded for both fiscal years 88 and 89, in descending order by FY 89 grant. For each project it lists the Children at Risk grants for both years and the percentage increase or decrease; it also lists the number of children ISBE recommended that the project serve in each year, and the percentage increase or decrease.

State Funding and Recommended Numbers of Children

Illinois Children at Risk Preschool, FY 88 and 89

Project[43]	FY88 Grant	FY89 Grant	% +/-	FY88 # to Serve	FY89 # to Serve	% +/-
Chicago	$5,917,500	$11,042,000	87%	2,800	4,918	76%
Rockford	200,000	730,000	265	100	325	225
Schaumburg	353,000	550,000	56	291	300	0
Springfield	370,000	530,000	43	170	270	59
Danville	210,000	325,000	55	100	150	50
Joliet	160,000	280,000	75	100	120	20
Mattoon	180,000	240,107	33	110	162	47
Urbana	156,000	240,000	54	80	120	50
Elgin	173,000	225,000	30	70	90	29
Galesburg	142,542	210,000	47	70	100	43
Aurora West	137,500	200,000	46	60	87	45
Cairo	160,000	200,000	25	85	100	18
Rantoul	180,200	200,000	11	120	125	4
Pembroke	135,000	190,000	41	90	84	-7
Litchfield	70,000	180,000	157	40	72	80

[43]The grant totals listed include only state funding for these programs; no information is available on resources that the individual districts which operate these projects might have supplied. The numbers of children are those which ISBE recommended that these projects serve. Total annual enrollment often varies widely from these recommendations, coming in lower if the districts fail to enroll the full complement of students, and higher if students leave in mid year and their slots are filled by new students.

State Funding and Recommended Numbers of Children

Project	FY88 Grant	FY89 Grant	% +/-	FY88 # to Serve	FY89 # to Serve	% +/-
Chicago Heights	$160,000	$180,000	13%	71	72	1%
Granite City	136,000	170,000	25	75	80	7
Mt. Vernon	80,000	160,000	100	40	80	100
Posen-Robbins	114,000	150,000	32	75	90	20
Hillsboro	130,000	150,000	15	60	80	33
Sterling	65,000	146,253	125	38	80	111
La Grange	120,000	145,000	21	58	74	28
Sheldon	85,000	140,000	65	53	75	42
Wood Dale	131,000	140,000	7	50	52	4
Indian Springs	123,400	140,000	14	40	57	43
Decatur	78,001	130,000	67	60	64	7
Bellwood	99,000	125,000	26	49	70	43
Hamilton	37,500	120,000	220	25	48	92
Pekin	75,000	110,000	47	40	80	100
Champaign	96,000	110,000	15	55	80	46
Taylorville	75,000	100,000	33	50	75	50
West Chicago	75,000	100,000	33	30	40	33
Savanna	72,000	100,000	39	32	40	25
North Chicago	56,250	99,995	78	25	45	80
Moline	45,500	92,000	102	20	60	200
Bethalto	60,000	91,235	52	42	45	7
Aurora East	30,000	90,000	200	20	45	125
Jonesboro	54,600	90,000	65	20	40	100
Peoria	90,000	90,000	0	100	50	-50
West Harvey/Dixmoor	75,000	90,000	20	40	45	13
Harrisburg	60,000	85,000	42	30	60	100
Fox Lake	46,620	84,979	82	20	48	140
Kankakee	42,000	80,000	91	17	40	135

State Funding and Recommended Numbers of Children

Project	FY88 Grant	FY89 Grant	% +/-	FY88 # to Serve	FY89 # to Serve	% +/-
Rock Island	$74,000	$80,000	8%	40	40	0%
East Chicago Heights	40,350	80,000	98	15	30	100
DeKalb	40,000	80,000	100	20	38	90
Barrington	40,000	80,000	100	18	45	150
Wabash	75,000	78,000	4	30	32	7
Mic'othian	50,000	75,000	50	33	36	9
Crete Monee	47,000	74,828	59	20	32	60
Galva	35,000	74,356	113	20	32	60
Vienna	46,500	70,000	51	25	40	60
Harvard	35,000	70,000	100	20	35	75
Oswego	35,000	70,000	100	18	35	94
Prairie Central	40,000	65,000	63	20	40	100
Park Forest	40,000	65,000	63	20	35	75
Meridian	52,000	65,000	25	28	30	7
Joppa-Maple Grove	52,500	62,000	18	20	30	50
Woodstock	50,000	60,000	20	40	38	-5
Paris Union	36,000	60,000	67	20	32	60
Arbor Park	22,000	60,000	173	15	30	100
Huntley	30,800	58,685	91	20	26	30
Camp Point	30,000	58,500	95	20	24	20
Elk Grove	40,000	58,400	46	18	35	94
Lincoln	35,726	58,000	62	20	35	75
Lombard	30,000	57,608	92	12	24	100
Monmouth	34,000	57,000	68	15	24	60
Villa Park	32,500	52,000	60	15	20	33
Gavin	32,500	51,000	57	15	25	67
Putnam	46,000	50,000	9	20	22	10
Lawrenceville	40,000	50,000	25	27	20	-26

State Funding and Recommended Numbers of Children

Project	FY88 Grant	FY89 Grant	% +/-	FY88 # to Serve	FY89 # to Serve	% +/-
Red Bud	$24,500	$49,700	103%	10	24	140%
Jacksonville	39,000	47,000	21	20	26	30
Gallatin	33,000	46,674	41	15	30	100
Pope	37,000	46,000	24	15	20	33
Carbondale	22,000	44,600	103	10	30	200
Staunton	21,000	43,000	105	15	18	20
Quincy	35,000	42,700	22	20	26	30
Hamilton	37,500	41,000	9	25	30	20
Evanston	26,000	40,000	54	13	16	23
Shabbona	25,500	40,000	57	12	20	67
Carrier Mills-Stonefront	22,000	40,000	82	12	20	67
Winnebago	21,989	40,000	82	15	20	33
Ball-Chatham	25,472	37,312	47	17	20	18
O'Fallon	31,500	35,000	11	20	28	40
North Wayne	23,000	34,000	48	10	20	100
Macomb	18,800	30,600	63	10	15	50
Wayne City	22,000	30,000	36	10	15	50
Hardin	24,000	29,300	22	12	15	25
Edwards County	22,000	27,500	25	13	15	15
Carrollton	24,000	26,700	11	18	20	11
Alden Hebron	18,000	21,700	21	10	12	20

Appendix C: Variation in Projects' Use of Preschool Funds By Major Budget Categories, FY89*

Budget Categories

Descriptive Statistics	Actual Grant in Dollars	% Administration	% Instruction Improvement	% Salary and Fringe Benefits	% Screening and Pupil Support	% Community Service	% Transportation	% Instructional Materials and Equipment	% Misc.
Maximum	11,042,000	15	16	100	41	25	45	40	82
Minimum	20,800	0	0	26	0	0	0	0	0
Mean	179,224	2	2	64	5	2	8	11	5
Median**	60,000	0	2	61	1	0	5	9	2
Std. Dev.***	954,763	3	2	16	8	5	10	9	

*The unit of analysis is the budget of each project that receives Children At Risk funds. Hence, the second column indicates that the maximum any project spent on administration was 15 percent of its grant, that the minimum amount was zero, and that the average amount was 2 percent. The figures should be treated with caution because projects use different criteria in listing funds in budget categories. Accordingly, the project that assigns 82 percent of its funds for miscellaneous expenditures is clearly counting salaries as a miscellaneous expenditure. If ISBE could clarify its budgetary guidelines and make sure that projects follow them consistently in assigning expenditures to budget categories, such an analysis could become a useful monitoring tool.

**The median is the value above which and below which half of the observations fall. Therefore, the median score in the first column indicates that half the projects receiving preschool funds have grants in excess of $60,000 and half have grants that are less than $60,000.

***The standard deviation is a measure of the variability of scores expressed in the same unit of measurement as the original score. The greater the standard deviation, the greater the variability of values.

Source: Staff analysis of data collected by the Illinois State Board of Education.

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